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Student Affairs Fee  
Advisory Board  
DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

### Funding Request Form FY2023

**Department:**

Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs – Marketing & Communications

**Program, Service or Operation Requested:**

One-time funds for a two-year subscription to Sprout Social platform.

**General Description:**

Sprout Social is a highly rated social media management platform that includes listening, publishing, engagement, and analytics features.

**Request Type:**

- Full     
  Increase     
  One-Time     
  Partial/Matching

**Type of Funds Requested:**

- UAF     
  Other

**General Questions**

***How does this address an important need and/or positively impact students?***

It is a given that Texas A&M students utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook for news and information on Texas A&M events, activities, and key messages. The Texas A&M University social media team conducted extensive research during the course of a year and determined that it would purchase Sprout Social. TAMU’s social media channels get some of the highest engagement in the nation in higher ed. After using the unpaid version of Hootsuite for the past four years and experiencing growth in our social media followers, we would like to upgrade to a more robust system to better serve our students and make social media management more efficient for our staff. Also, it would give our full-time and student team the opportunity to learn and use a highly rated tool and to teach others across the division.

***What department/Division strategic plan item does this support?***

A more robust social media management platform such as Sprout Social would enrich student learning experiences, contribute to student success, create an inclusive environment, support student wellbeing, ensure future effectiveness, and enhance staff development through more creative, consistent, and regular social media content on a state-of-the art platform that would provide for the professional development of our social media

coordinator and student social media assistants. This user-friendly platform has the capability to manage multiple channels, a much wider range of insightful reporting options, and effective collaboration tools. It consistently ranks as the best social media management tool compared to others such as Hootsuite, Buffer, MeetEdgar, or Gain.

***Please provide data, evidence, and/or input (student faculty, staff, other) you gathered to help you determine the need for additional resources.***

We've been using the free version of Hootsuite for five years and have found additional challenges in managing multiple channels, monitoring other TAMU and DSA channels, and utilizing reporting tools that allow us to see a clear picture of our social media metrics. The Texas A&M University social media team has reported great results with Sprout Social. It will allow us to be more efficient in how and when we post and will give our social media coordinator additional options.

***What actions have you implemented or discontinued internally to address the identified need?***

Funds were identified to hire a temporary student employee to assist with creating and posting social media content, particularly to assist with daily posts to @AggieVPRamirez. We are challenged with finding time to adequately populate DSA Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, (plus AggieVPRamirez Twitter) with high-quality, relevant and engaging posts from across the division because of limitations with our social media management tool.

***If funding is granted, what metrics will you use to evaluate success of this program/service/operation?***

We will use Sprout Social analytics tools to measure standard social media metrics and compare them to previous years' metrics.

***Have other sources of funding (fundraising, sponsorship, reserves, etc.) been considered? Please explain.***

Fundraising or sponsorship for basic student affairs marketing expenses such as a social media management tool is not normally practiced in higher education. It is unlikely this would become a priority for our development team. Our operational reserves are earmarked for future student employee salaries.

**Total Estimated Cost**

<b>Funding Description</b>	<b>Amount</b>
<b>Sprout Social Media Management Tool</b>	
One-Time Funding for Two Years (\$1,068 annual)	\$2,136
<i>Less Estimated Partial/Matching Funds (if Applicable)</i>	
<b>TOTAL INCREASE REQUESTED</b>	<b>\$2,136</b>